

LONG-NOSED POTOROO

Vulnerable

Endangered

Critically Endangered

Extinct in the Wild

Extinct



Common name

Long-nosed potoroo

Scientific name

Potorous tridactylus

Habitat

Its main requirement are forests and heath with thick groundcover, which it needs for protection and nesting material. It also prefers light soils that are easy to dig in for the underground roots and fungi that are its main food.

Habitat range/distribution

The long-nosed potoroo is found on the south-eastern coast of Australia, from southern Queensland to eastern Victoria and Tasmania, including some of the Bass Strait islands. There are geographically isolated populations in western Victoria and the far south-east corner of South Australia. In Queensland the long-nosed potoroo lives in a variety of environments, from wet eucalypt forests to coastal heaths and scrubs, along the coast and Great Dividing Range of south-east Queensland through to NSW.

Description

The long-nosed potoroo contains three subspecies: one from south-east Queensland south to the Sydney Basin; another from south of Sydney to Victoria and South Australia; and the third from Tasmania and the Bass Strait islands.

At first glance, the long-nosed potoroo with its pointed nose and grey-brown fur looks very much like a bandicoot—that is, until it hops away with its front feet tucked into its chest, revealing its close relationship with the kangaroo family. It is only a small marsupial, with a body length up to 41cm and a semi-prehensile tail length up to 26cm. Semi-prehensile means the tail can grab things.

Potoroos are mainly nocturnal, resting during the day in small depressions under dense cover. They use a range of micro-habitats for different behaviours such as feeding and sheltering.

Importance

Potoroos eat many types of food such as bulbs, tubers, roots, and fruit but it is fungi that they favour most of all. The long-nosed potoroo's highly developed sense of smell makes it incredibly good at detecting and unearthing a range of fungal species for consumption. Like other Australian burrowing mammals, potoroos are important 'ecosystem engineers', digging, turning over and mixing soil and organic matter.

It is possible that the long-nosed potoroo spreads important fungi to other areas of its habitat.

Key threats

The main threats to the long-nosed potoroo are loss and fragmentation of habitat (due to human settlement, agriculture and forestry); degradation of habitat from livestock grazing and weeds; introduced predators (feral cats, wild dogs and red foxes); and inappropriate fire regimes.

What is being done to help protect and conserve this species

- Applying fire regimes that maintain dense understorey vegetation cover.
- Where fire control is necessary applying mosaic pattern hazard reduction burns to ensure the same areas are not burned repeatedly.
- Fox, wild dog, and cat control programs.
- Protecting and maintaining habitat, especially forests and heath with dense understoreys.

Become a long-nosed potoroo champion

If you live in an area where potoroos occur, there are several things you can do to help protect them. These include:

- de-sexing domestic cats and dogs
- preventing domestic cats and dogs from roaming and keeping them inside at night
- protecting and maintaining habitat, especially those with dense understoreys
- talk to your friends and family about threats to long-nosed potoroo and what they can do.



We can live in any forests or heathland that have a dense cover of vegetation and have a good supply of our favourite food, fungi!



TRUE OR FALSE

Circle your answer

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. The potoroo is a marsupial. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 2. Potoroos are not nocturnal, resting during the night in small depressions under dense cover. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 3. When threatened, potoroos can leap very high if necessary. | TRUE | FALSE |

FIND THE FUNGI!

Help the potoroo use its sense of smell to find its way to its favourite food ... fungi!



When bush fires destroy our habitat, we are forced to move on—occupying new areas and making new homes.

